

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OES-03 /070 W

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3374

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 429

E.O. 1652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, CH

SUBJECT: TIENTSIN EARTHQUAKE PREPARATIONS

SUMMARY: CHINESE IN TIENTSIN ARE TALKING OPENLY ABOUT AN EARTHQUAKE PREDICTED FOR THE CITY. THE PROPAGANDA APPARATUS IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO TAKE ADEQUATE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES WHILE REMAINING CALM.

1. DURING MARCH 12. VISIT OF USLO PERSONNEL TO TIENTSIN, THEIR CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT AN EARTHQUAKE IS EXPECTED

TO HIT THE CITY SOMETIME SOON AND THAT CERTAIN PRECAUTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY CITY AUTHORITIES TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE. ORIGINALLY, THE GUIDE SAID IT HAD BEEN RUMORED THAT THE TOWN WOULD HAVE AN EARTHQUAKE BETWEEN

MARCH 1 AND 10, BUT THAT DATE HAS PASSED AND TIENTSIN RESIDENTS HAVE NOW BEEN TOLD SIMPLY TO BE ALERT TO THE EARTHQUAKE POSSIBILITY. THE AUTHORITIES ARE NOT PREDICTING A VIOLENT QUAKE, THE GUIDE SAID, BUT RATHER ONE OF UNDER FIVE ON THE RICHTER SCALE.

2. THE GUIDE SAID THAT MOVIE THEATERS IN TIENTSIN ARE NOW SHOWING
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A SHORT FEATURE ON EARTHQUAKES (PERHAPS THE SAME ONE WE HAVE

OBSERVED ON PEKING TELEVISION WHICH PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE NATURE OF QUAKE, METHODS OF EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION, AND PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING EARTHQUAKES TO REDUCE DANGER TO LIVES AND PROPERTY.) A MAJOR THEME OF THE MOVIE ACCORDING TO THE GUIDE IS THAT CITIZENS MUST NOT PANIC DURING A QUAKE. THIS MESSAGE, HE INDICATED, IS BEING OFT REITERATED TO TIENTSIN CITIZENS THESE DAYS.

3. THE USLO PERSONNEL WERE NOT ALLOWED TO EAT AT A POPULAR TIENTSIN "PAOTZE" RESTAURANT, BECAUSE, THEY WERE TOLD, THE BUILDING IS OLD AND THE CHINESE WOULD NOT WANT FOREIGNERS THERE IN THE EVENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE. FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN IN TIENTSIN COMPLAINED THAT IN CONTRAST TO USUAL PRACTICE, THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO MEET WITH THE TIENTSIN BRANCHES OF THE STATE TRADING CORPORATIONS IN CORPORATION'S OFFICES OR SHOWROOMS AND, THAT ALL BUSINESS WAS BEING CARRIED OUT IN THEIR HOTEL INSTEAD. THIS MAY ALSO BE DUE TO SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT FOREIGNERS IN THE EVENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE.

4. IN A MOVE PRESUMABLY ALSO DESIGNED TO CALM FEARS IN THE TIENTSIN-PEKING AREA, PEKING RADIO TODAY CARRIED THE TEXT OF A STATE COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE COMMENDING CONCERNED UNITS FOR GIVING ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE LIAONING EARTHQUAKE. A LONG COMPANION ITEM ON THE LIAONING EARTHQUAKE EMPHASIZED THE ACCURATE PREDICTION OF THAT QUAKE AS WELL AS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ADVANCED WARNING GIVEN THE PEOPLE AND FAST ACTION TAKEN AFTER IT OCCURRED IN MINIMIZING CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE.
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